

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SAUDI EDUCATION MISSION

REF (A) 75 JIDDA 8293, (B) 75 STATE 301011

1. THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF THE SAUDI EDUCATIONAL MISSION AT HOUSTON, AND PARTICULAR THAT OF ITS DIRECTOR MR. MANGUR, HAS STILL NOT BEEN RESOLVED. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NOW SEEMS TO ACCEPT THAT THE MISSION SHOULD BE DESIGNATED A CONSULATE, BUT IN A MEETING WITH THE DCM ON FEBRUARY 7 THE DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL SALIM SUNBOL AND THE MINISTRY'S LEGAL ADVISOR MOHAMMED MADANI ARGUED THAT THE PERSONNEL OF THE CONSULATE SHOULD HAVE DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES.

2. THEY MAINTAINED THAT THE 1933 SAUDI-US TREATY ON DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR REPRESENTATION; JUDICIAL PROTECTION; COMMERCE AND NAVIGATION (11 BEVANS 456) CALLS FOR MUTUALITY AND RECIPROCITY OF PRIVILEGES. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS TREATY, THEY SAID, OUR CONSULATE GENERAL PERSONNEL IN DHAHRAN HAVE BEEN ACCORDED FULL DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AND THE SAME SHOULD THEREFORE BE GRANTED TO SAUDI PERSONNEL IN HOUSTON.

3. ACCORDING TO OUR READING OF THE TREATY THE SAUDI OFFICIALS ARE NOT COMPLETELY CORRECT. THE TREATY SPECIFICALLY CALLS FOR CONSULAR OFFICIALS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES TO "ENJOY THE HONORARY PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES ACCORDED TO SUCH OFFICERS BY GENERAL INTERNATIONAL USAGE..." THERE IS NO SPECIFIC

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MENTION OF RECIPROCITY IN THIS ARTICLE OF THE TREATY. THE

FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SAG HAS GRANTED FULL DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES TO THE STAFF OF OUR IMPORTANT CONSULATE GENERAL IN DHAHRAN. SUNBOL AND MADANI COMMENTED THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD PERHAPS HAVE TO RECONSIDER THE CONSULATE GENERAL'S STATUS IF WE CANNOT RECIPROCATATE.

5. WE THINK THE SAUDIS MAY BE BLUFFING. THE SITUATIONS ARE NOT SYMETRICAL. OURS IS THE ONLY CONSULATE IN THE KINGDOM. WE ASSUME THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONSULATES IN HOUSTON. BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS OF LAW AND PRECEDENT WE APPRECIATE THAT THERE MAY BE NOTHING WE CAN DO TO MEET SAUDI DESIRES. WE WOULD NONETHELESS APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S RECONSIDERING THE MATTER BEFORE WE AGAIN APPROACH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. PERHAPS USG FLEXIBILITY ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER MANGUR CAN LIVE IN HOUSTON WHILE BEING ATTACHED TO THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON MIGHT OFFER US AN OUT SINCE THE SAUDIS SEEM BASICALLY CONCERNED ONLY ABOUT MANGUR'S STATUS.

6. OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN DHAHRAN IS AN ISOLATED HARDSHIPPOST DIFFICULT TO STAFF WITH THE QUALITY OF PERSONNEL MERITED BY ITS IMPORTANCE TO US INTERESTS. THE LOSS OF ANY PRESENT PRIVILEGES WOULD BE A BLOW TO MORALE AND MAKE FUTURE STAFFING EVEN MORE DIFFICULT.
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